

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A method of preparing content for distribution in an Internet broadcast system for streaming media comprising the steps of:
  - obtaining content intended for distribution via broadcast;
- 5        repacketizing said content to generate a broadcast Internet Protocol stream, said stream comprising sequence numbers and time stamps for packets in said content;
  - storing stream information relating to said stream comprising at least one of identification of input source, destination, groups of devices selected to receive said stream, and stream identification; and
- 10        assigning said stream an Internet Protocol address and port in said broadcast system for transmission, said stream information allowing for monitoring recovery of said stream at said destination.
2. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said repacketizing step comprises the step of
- 15        wrapping said packets in said stream using real-time transport protocol.
3. A method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising the step of transmitting said stream using a real-time streaming protocol connection.
- 20        4. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said obtaining step comprises the step of receiving content from different types of media players, and said repacketizing step comprises the step of wrapping packets from said media players using the same broadcast IP protocol.
- 25        5. A method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising the step of transmitting said stream, said stream comprising said content and auxiliary information comprising information relating to codecs and bit rates used to generate said content and data to facilitate reception and identification of said stream when packets therein are received at a reception site.
- 30        6. A method as claimed in claim 5, wherein said auxiliary information is updated during said stream.
7. A method as claimed in claim 5, wherein a device for transmitting said stream and a device for receiving said stream communicate via a real-time streaming protocol connection,

said transmitting step comprising the step of updating said auxiliary data during said connection.

8. A computer program product for preparing content for distribution in an Internet broadcast system for streaming media comprising:
- 5 a computer-readable medium;  
an encoding module stored on said computer-readable medium for receiving streams from different media players and wrapping packets in respective streams using a broadcast Internet Protocol common to all of said media players, said encoding module providing
- 10 auxiliary information in each said stream that relates to that stream;  
a reception control module stored on said computer-readable medium and being operable to store information relating to respective said streams to facilitate reception thereof; and  
a transmission module stored on said computer-readable medium for commencing
- 15 and terminating connections to transmit said streams via said Internet broadcast system and operating in conjunction with said reception control module to update said auxiliary information during said stream.
9. A computer program product as claimed in claim 8, wherein said encoding module, said reception control module and said transmission module are compiled in an encoder to allow said encoder to appear at a large number of locations in a network to other network devices.
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10. A computer program product as claimed in claim 8, wherein said encoding module, said reception control module and said transmission module are compiled in an encoder to configure said encoder with a proxy for communicating with another device.
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11. A computer program product as claimed in claim 8, wherein said computer program product is implemented as a stand-alone application provided at the output of an encoder to configure said encoder with a proxy for communicating with another device.
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12. An apparatus for content distribution comprising:  
a server; and

an encoding module operable with said server to encode packets to be output via said server into a selected format for transmission as a broadcast Internet Protocol stream.

13. An apparatus as claimed in claim 12, wherein said encoding module is operable to  
5 encode said packets corresponding to different streams being served via said server with header information to facilitate which of said packets belong to which of said streams during reception.
14. An apparatus as claimed in claim 13, wherein said header information comprises at  
10 least one of bit rates used by said encoding module, audio channel information, video channel information, stereo reception, surround-sound reception, packet sequence numbers, time stamps relating to at least one of said packets and said streams.
15. An apparatus as claimed in claim 13, wherein receivers of said streams employ said  
15 header information for converting said broadcast Internet Protocol to another protocol, said header information being dynamically updated.